

# THE LEISURE HOUR.

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ROLAND RECOGNISED BY THE OLD OSTLER.

## ROLAND LEIGH; OR, THE STORY OF A CITY ARAB.

CHAPTER L.—I HEAR TIDINGS OF PEGGY, REVISIT MY OLD STABLE LOFT, AND RENEW ACQUAINTANCE WITH BEN THE OSTLER.

THE interest I felt in the stricken child at Whis-  
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kers' Rents did not cause me altogether to neglect my search after Peggy Magrath; but it was unsuccessful. Her old employers had not seen her since her imprisonment; probably, therefore, shame for that disgrace had impelled her to seek another

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sphere for her industry. That she had sought me, however, was pretty certain, for I remembered that she had been seen in Whiskers' Rents, and had held communication with our old landlord; but if the secret of her retirement had been—as it most likely was—intrusted to him, he had carried it with him to the grave.

I had no reason to believe that his successor, the Jew landlord, slackened in his inquiries; for the expectation of a golden reward would keep him on the alert; but he met with success little better than my own. There was one old inhabitant of Whiskers' Rents, indeed, who remembered to have seen my old nurse since the fever, and with him I was brought into communication. He was a German, and one of the few working bees in that hive of profligacy. Why he had chosen such a place for his habitat is inconceivable; but it had been his home a full quarter of a century. He was a widower, without kith or kin, so far as was known; he was dirty in his habits and person, and an inveterate smoker; he tenanted a single room in one of the least miserable houses in the locality, where he ate, drank, smoked, slept, and worked at his bench, at some small mechanical trade. In former times, and at rare intervals, Peggy had been employed by him in this home; and she was also his laundress, when he thought he needed one, or when he did not perform that office for himself.

To this old man, whom I had slightly known in my childhood, I was introduced a few days after the funeral of the widow's child; but he had no recollection of me. He remembered my old nurse, however—"boor Beggy," as he called her—and was sure that she had called on him "in sore drubble."

Could he tell me what the trouble was about?

He was not sure; but he "daught it was about de liddle schildt dat she call Roland Leigh?"

"And how long since was this?" I asked.

He could not say; he had a bad memory. It might be "dwo, dree, vour, vive year."

"And she did not say where she lived, or might be found?" I once more asked.

"Nein—not at all, mine friend."

"Can you tell me how she looked?" said I.

"Look! wid hor eyes, I do suppose," replied the old man, drily, emitting a huge volume of smoke from his foreign-looking pipe, which made my eyes water: "wid vat you call de obties," he added, by way of further explanation.

"True, my good friend; but I mean what sort of appearance had she?"

"Oh, I understand: abear! well: she vas boor Beggy; note vaary differant vrom de old vay: She vas vat you call slyby, slobdy: and—"

"She was very poor, then?" said I.

Nein! he could not say dat, responded the German; indeed, he should think not; for when, touched with her evident distress of mind, and supposing it to arise from poverty if not destitution, he offered her alms, she would not receive them. This he said in other words, and added that "de grade lamendation of boor Beggy vas aboud de liddle schildt, Roland."

I thanked the old man for answering my questions; and was about to turn away in despair of receiving any further information, when he re-

membered that Mrs. Magrath had spoken of a stable yard where she had been searching for "de liddle schildt," as the old man persisted in speaking of me, quite at a loss to comprehend, as it seemed, that time had turned the little child into a man, and that, in fact, I myself was the Roland Leigh of whom poor Peggy was in search.

She had sought for me, then, and had discovered my retreat. Perhaps if I had not been kidnapped away from my old stable loft, or if I had returned to London immediately after my shipwreck, we might long ago have met; and the thought distressed me, if it did not cause me to murmur and rebel. For, reader, such as Peggy Magrath was, she was inexpressibly dear to me; and the hope of carefully nurturing her in her age, as she had nurtured me in my childhood, was one of the bright visions of my mortal life.

Whatever other effect the information I had obtained from the old German of Whiskers' Rents had upon me, it quickened my determination to prosecute my researches; and the next leisure hour I could command led me to the stable yard, where I found my old friend at his accustomed occupation, rubbing down a horse with a wisp of straw, and whistling ostlerwise. He was but little altered; only that his whistle, I thought, sounded feebler, and his head was more plentifully sprinkled with grey hairs—which was surely to be expected; for Ben the ostler must have been, at that time, verging on or hastening towards threescore years and five.

I stood by him, as he went on with his job, unconscious of my presence, till a change of posture occasioned him to look up. Then he did not recognise me.

He touched—not his hat, for he was bare-headed—but a stray lock of his grizzled hair, and looked inquiringly, as waiting my commands.

"You don't know me, then, Ben?" I said.

He opened his eyes wide, and looked puzzled; but no gleam of intelligence crossed his countenance; and he shook his head.

"I am Roland Leigh."

If a pistol had been exploded unexpectedly close to his ear, I am not certain that he would have started more naturally, or altered in countenance more completely. Still, he did not speak, nor did he move, until, closely scanning me from head to foot, and finally suffering his eyes to rest on my face, he gradually relaxed; his eyes twinkled, as it seemed, with strange emotion, and he laid hold of my extended hand, and returned its pressure with a genuine Yorkshire squeeze, which made my arm tingle to the elbow joint. Then he broke silence.

"I always said thou'd coom back for it," he cried. "I be glad to see thee, Roley. The Lord knows I be glad to see thee; and thou shall ha' it. I knew thou'd coom back for it."

"You were right, you see, Ben; I am come back," said I, a little wondering what he thought I had come back for.

"I've taken care on't, Roley," he went on; "but I reckon 'tis a wee bit wore and grimed; but thou winnot mind it, lad. I've taken care on't."

"Why, what are you talking about, my friend?" I asked, astonished partly at his strange emo-

tion, partly too at a yet more strange alteration which seemed to have passed over him in his mode of speech—I don't mean in his semi-provincial dialect, but in the earnest solemnity with which he spoke, and in the absence of profane oaths, which I had expected would have broken from his lips at the moment of recognition. And I was still altogether at a loss to understand to what "it" he referred, of which he had taken such care, and for which he had expected me to return.

"The Lord be praised and thanked that thou didn't take it aw' wi' thee," said he, grasping my hand again fervently, and big drops glistened first under his eyelids, till they overflowed, and then down his bronzed cheeks.

It—it—still the "it." "You must tell me what you mean, Ben," said I; "I left nothing behind worth having, that I can remember, except—"

"Not in t'loft, lad? not in t'loft?"

"Nothing (I was just going to say) except my Bible, and—" I stopped short, and looked closer at my old friend; for the truth—the blessed truth—the hope, at least, that, in the gracious providence of God, that Bible had been made "the power of God to salvation" to the once ignorant and profane old man, flashed on my mind.

"Tis t'Bible, lad, I am telling of," said he; "the Bible thou left in t'loft;" and once more he took my hand and shook it heartily. "Thou didn't think there was mercy for poor old Ben, did thee?"

"There's mercy for all who seek it," I responded, little less affected than he; "but you must tell me all about it, Ben."

"Coom up into t'loft when I've put t'nag in t'stable," said he, "and I'll tell thee;" and, without loss of time, he stabled the horse, and then led the way to my old resting-place.

I followed, and there, seated beside old Ben, on a truss of straw, I heard him tell how, some time after my second disappearance, he had happened to find my Bible in its hiding-place; how, moved by some strong impulse, for which he could not account, he had opened and read chapters, and parts of chapters, from time to time; how suddenly he became alarmed in his conscience by the statements of revealed truth, respecting the condemnation of transgressors against the divine law; how he had no peace by day nor rest by night, but still went on reading, reading, reading the book that had made him miserable, for it had a strange and irresistible fascination; how, when he was nearly driven to despair, he had lighted on and obtained some feeble glimmering of the hope of the gospel; how his perception of the glorious revelation of mercy—mercy for the vilest of the vile—broke in upon his soul; how he prayed, and prayed again for that mercy, found it, and rejoiced in it; how his fears and his dreadful despair were swallowed up and lost in the "faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even "the chief of sinners;" how, amidst all these alternations of feeling, and while new desires, affections, and hopes were springing up in his soul, he had become so different from what he once was, as to

draw upon himself the observation of everybody in the yard; and how, when they found out the cause (but, indeed, he had not tried to conceal it), he had been exposed to ridicule, temptation, and persecution; but how also "the blessed Lord Jesus hadn't let him go."

All this, and much more, old Ben told me with great simplicity and overflowing gratitude; and when he had done, he produced my old Bible, wrapped carefully in a handkerchief, and put it into my hands. It was rather "worn and grimed," as he had said, but it was none the worse for that.

I did not reclaim it. There had been times—in Thieves' Castle, for instance—when I had regretted very deeply that my best companion was left behind, little dreaming of the work it was to do in my old stable-loft.

So deeply interested was I in the old ostler's history, that I almost forgot the purport of my visit. At length, when I was bidding him farewell, promising to see him again, however, I be-thought me of Peggy Magrath, and told Ben my errand.

Yes, she had sought me at the stable-yard. By whatever means she had discovered my retreat, she had followed me; and, in spite of the jokes and jeers to which her earnest manner and her Irish accent had exposed her, from ostlers, grooms, and stable-boys, poor Peggy had persevered, for more than two years, in haunting the place, in expectation of some day finding me. Her first visit must have been paid very soon after my disappearance; and her lamentations for me, as the hope of my return became more faint, were very violent. Finally, she discontinued her visits, and more than three years had passed away since she had been seen, so that, until my question recalled it, the circumstance had almost faded from Ben's memory.

This was all the satisfaction I could obtain, and leaving my direction with Ben, in the feeble and forlorn hope that my poor nurse might again seek me there, I departed.

#### CHAPTER LI.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING, LEADING TO IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES.—I RECEIVE MY FATHER'S PROMISED COMMUNICATION.

One more visit, and my private affairs, as well as my employer's, would be finished. Do not suppose, reader, that I had forgotten Fanny Grey, and that it was without a struggle that I determined not to visit Daffodil Farm, and my kind friends, the aged clergyman and Mr. Blake, before returning to Yorkshire. In another year or two I might perhaps venture, but not now.

But if I dared not so far trust myself as to see Fanny, I might pay a visit to her father, if he were to be found, and thank him for the instruction he had given me. Little as education had benefited him, because he wilfully abused his gifts, the rudiments of knowledge he had imparted to me had contributed to my prosperity, and helped me to rise higher than I could have done if I had remained ignorant as I was before he took me in hand. Moreover, in spite of his degrading habit, he had been a friendly teacher to me. I resolved, if possible, to see him.

On the last day of my sojourn in London, there-

fore, I proceeded to the house in which I had last known Fanny's father, and knocked at the door. An old woman opened it, and replied to my inquiry, that Mr. Grey lived there still, but he was very bad ; would I please to walk in ?

I walked in, and entered the room which had been his workshop and evening schoolroom. The workboard was still there, but unoccupied ; and a fire was burning in the grate. It seemed to me, moreover, that a pleasant change had passed over that small apartment. It was clean ; and a few small articles of furniture had been added, which gave it a more habitable appearance. Before I had recovered from my surprise, the woman was gone.

I waited four or five minutes, and then I took up a book which lay on the table. It had Fanny's name in it, in her own handwriting ; and I laid it down again with a heavy sigh. At that moment I heard a light step without, the door opened, and then Fanny herself stood before me !

For a moment we were both stricken with sudden surprise ; but, on her countenance, that expression speedily changed to one of delight, as she sprung towards me and clasped my hand, and, calling me by my old familiar name, said, how kind, how very kind, it was of me to come to see her in her trouble.

" Trouble ! what trouble ? "

Hadn't I heard, then, how ill her poor father was, and had been for three months ? She had come to London to nurse him ; but he did not get any better ; and a look of sadness spread over her face. And hadn't I heard how kind and good dear uncle Blake had been to her father ? how he had brought Fanny to London to take care of him, and supplied her with money to have everything comfortable, and to pay for medical advice and nursing ?

No, of course, I had heard nothing of all this ; but it accounted for the altered aspect of the room.

" But the doctor says there is only one hope left for poor father—country air ; and so to-morrow uncle Blake is coming to fetch us, and take father and me both down to Daffodil Farm ; so if you had not come to-day, Roland, you would have missed seeing me—us, I mean ; and I should have been so sorry."

Sorry ! sorry ! why should Fanny be sorry ? Well, well ; it was not the time exactly for talking about—about anything future ; and if it had been, I am not in the mood to treat my readers with a love scene. All I have to say is, that my resolutions melted away like a white frost in April sunshine ; and, whether for good or evil, before I said good-bye, I had promised Fanny that the next time I came up from Yorkshire, I would spend a week at Daffodil Farm.

No, we did not speak of love ; but I knew then, as well as I know now, that we understood each other, and that Fanny was not shocked or angry at my presumption ; and I travelled down to York-shire the next day with a light heart.

Soon after my return, I received a packet with a foreign post-mark. It was my father's promised communication, containing some portion of his history, and a short, meagre note, to inform me that he had reached his destination. He also inclosed a certificate of his marriage with my

mother. This might be of use to me, he said ; and, as it could be of none to him, he sent it to keep company with the portrait he had left in my hands.

There was nothing in the letter, and nothing in the history which accompanied it, calculated to give me pleasure or hope. Even the confessions they contained were too evidently wrung from him by disappointment and failure, while one lesson seemed to be stamped on every page, paragraph, and line ; namely, that education, talents, foresight, promptitude, hardihood and courage, when misapplied to the service of sin, do but increase the power of mischief, and entail the greater curse upon their unhappy possessor and upon the world.

#### THE MONTHS IN LONDON.—JUNE.

ETYMOLOGISTS have been sadly perplexed in endeavouring to fix the derivation of the name of this month. It seems even to have been doubted and disputed so far back as the time of Ovid, who poetically details the claims of different deities to the honour implied, but does not pretend to settle them. The probability seems to be that June was so named by the Romans in memory of Junius Brutus, who expelled the Tarquins from Rome, and thus delivered them from a tyranny too hateful to be borne.

The June of the British Isles, so far as climate is concerned, may be looked upon as identical with the May month of the southern nations of Europe, and is worthy of all the encomiums which the poets have heaped upon it. We call June " leafy June," because the leafing of trees is in this month complete in all its richness and fulness, and Nature everywhere puts on her garments of brightest green. In the recesses of the forest at this particular season, every virgin leaf, unsullied by descending storms or rising dust, hangs in new-born purity upon the bough ; the ruddy sunbeams flashing like sharp swords through the lofty shield of foliage, spot the sward beneath with flickering gleams of fire ; the light warm breeze murmurs whisperingly among the drooping branches, and from a thousand warbling throats the voice of praise and gladness pervades the exquisite gloom. At such a time the lover of Nature can find no language to express the rapture that fills his heart, and he will worship in thoughtful silence in the beautiful gate of the temple which God has reared, and gratefully " muse his praise."

We call June " flowery June" too, and not without reason ; for now the earth, unlocking her treasures at the command of Spring, who is the universal monarch, strews his way with fresh flowers, and crowns him with garlands, and nods her leafy tops in recognition of his sway. The white-blossomed hawthorn yet lingers in the hedges and sheds its odorous petals in showers upon the banks ; the sweet honeysuckle spreads its feeble arms among the briars and among the fence-rows, and repays by its delicate perfume the support it borrows ; the foxglove, with its luscious-looking pyramids of spotted bells, rears its graceful stature in out-of-the-way nooks and snug shady places ; the sweet-briar opens its fragile cup and proclaims by a breath of purest fragrance its modest worth and unobtrusive grace ; and the flaunting dog-rose, sharp with its formidable thorn, overtops the

wayside barriers, and spots the green mass with glittering stars of pink and white, and sheds the tender petals in our path. These, and a multitude besides, greet us as we walk abroad in the outskirts of the stony city; while in our patches of garden ground we have the valerian, the London-pride, the large white and golden lilies, and a few early pinks, and flowers of humbler name all in full bloom. And if we cannot grow roses—for roses, somehow, object to produce anything much better than a blight within the sound of Bow bells—we have them in plenty notwithstanding, for we can buy them in the street by the hundred, of the rose-hawkers, at the lowest mentionable cost, and we do buy them accordingly, and rejoice in their surpassing beauty and exquisite scent.

Besides flowers, June brings to us Londoners the first instalment of fruits of the season. Towards the end of the month, if not sooner, we get the strawberry in tolerable plenty. It is true that if we are in a hurry to eat them, we must pay for them at an extravagant rate. Strawberries make their yearly advent in London in a most dignified way, marching in first at something like guinea a potte, to the consternation of housewives and the tantalization of small boys with large capacities for demolishing such luxuries, who would fain exhibit their prowess. A little patience, however, soon brings them down to the vulgar level, and before they are a month old, the guinea's worth shall be available for sixpence, or even half that amount, and all London smells of the delicious fruit; and, if we have not been egregiously misinformed, London digestions are considerably improved, and in better working order. We could say something striking in this place, if our space permitted, upon strawberry culture for the London market, not in the neighbourhood of the metropolis alone, but in places a hundred miles away and more, which the railway, for all purposes of commerce, has brought nearer to Covent Garden than Richmond was twenty years ago.

Along with the strawberries come the gooseberries, and an unutterable benefaction they are to the Londoners, releasing us from the dominion of rhubarb, which has taken possession of our pie-dishes ever since March, and which, having along with a physick name undeniable physick qualities, is by a good portion of us only tolerated as a substitute for fruit when fruit is not to be had. Whole tons of gooseberries are devoured weekly in London in a green state, forming as they do the staple of the pies and pastry of the middle and lower classes. The currant follows soon after, and, if the season be favourable, will bring the raspberry in its train before the month is out.

In addition to fruit, June brings us a host of garden vegetables for the table, the new potatoes and summer cabbages leading the van, salads of all sorts constituting the main body, and green peas at a shilling a peck bringing up the rear. The coster is now in his glory, and, proud of the delicacies, young and tender, which load his travelling equipage, lifts up his voice in the streets with a confident roar, which has a really relishing tone in it as he thunders out a few appetising adjectives in recommendation of his succulent wares.

Among the street cries we may distinguish at this season that of the caged birds' friend and pro-

vider, the chickweed, groundsel, and turf-seller. His is a quiet sort of a cry; and when he is audible in the city, it is not so much in the broad highways and commercial thoroughfares as in parallel lines of route, in back streets, lanes, and courts. He brings the produce of the field to the imprisoned bird, and, moreover, to the thrush and lark he brings the field itself in the shape of a seven-inch square of clover turf cut that morning from the soil. He travels all day long, through city and suburbs, "singing his quiet tune," and pocketing his hard-earned penny. He knows all about song-birds, and will negotiate the purchase of a songster for you if you like. Young larks, he will tell you, are plentiful in June, the first broods of the year being fledged in this month. Whether he also knows that the young woodpeckers are fledged in June—that the kingshakers are sitting on their eggs—that the partridges also are sitting, and that sometimes, rather than move off at the approach of the mower, she will suffer herself to be cut in two by the scythe—whether he knows these facts is more than we can vouch for. If you talk to him about the cuckoo he will tell you that he rarely if ever hears that gentleman after the end of June; "for you see, sir, he's a bird what likes to make himself comfortable; he don't like the hot weather no more than the cold; he likes to draw it mild, he does, and runs arter the 'greeable weather wherever it goes. I reckon if he was a poor fellar like me, he'd leave his young uns to the workus, and not go about sellin' grasses to arn 'em a crust."

In the present year, the famous holiday of Whit Monday, so dear to the working classes, falls on the first day of June. This is a day on which, to a very large number of them, business and pleasure are combined. From time immemorial the members of benefit clubs have on this day marched in procession, and wound up the flaunting display with a feast. Benefit clubs are as old as the Saxon era in England, and a thousand years ago these anniversaries were held, and were the occasions of holidays and rejoicing. Our earliest recollections of Whit Monday are associated with benefit clubs and the grand display of flags, banners, silk scarfs, and music which characterise their ceremonials. In country places the custom was, and probably it yet prevails, for the women, dressed in white and carrying wands, bound round with flowers and gay ribbons, to head the procession, preceded only by the musicians, and followed by the male members bearing the flags and banners. The whole body marched thus to the morning service at the parish church, where they were certain to hear an appropriate sermon on the subject of brotherly love, the obligations of Christian charity, and the duties of providence and forethought. Sometimes the preacher, who felt an interest in the welfare of the club, would dine with the members in the afternoon, and by his presence subdue their gaiety to the limits of decorum. In London, in the present day, so far as our observation goes, the club processions are managed on a different principle. The public-house, and not the church, is the terminus of the procession; the flags, banners, big drums, and bands of wind instruments, assert themselves on a scale of extraordinary magnitude; and the big drum especially, which, like the big words

of vulgar orators, seems to have a fascination for the working ranks, becomes monarch of sounds and wakes up the echoes in every quarter. The public-house or tavern chosen for the club-feast is generally situated in some outlying district, from two to four miles from St. Paul's, and hither, after assembling at the town rendezvous, also a public-house, the procession will direct its course, and arrive in good time for the dinner. Now, supposing the feast to be enjoyed in moderation, and to be followed by no excess in the article of drinking during the evening of the day, a question might still arise as to the propriety of spending the funds of an institution organised for purposes of mutual benevolence, in the cost of flags, streamers, scarfs, and breast-ribbons, and a dinner to a hundred or two of members at five or six shillings a head. But supposing that instead of moderation and sobriety, the club dinner is marked by excess, intemperance, intoxication—the supposition, we presume, is not beyond the limits of possibility—so, supposing that to be the case, what have we then? Why, then we have the funds of an institution, organised for mutual benevolence, appropriated to purposes of mutual demoralisation; nay, more, we have the very cash subscribed to alleviate disease and poverty, deliberately invested in the surest means of producing both, with moral degradation into the bargain. We take the liberty of putting the matter thus strongly to our industrial friends, in order that they may see the abuse of which they are the dupes in its true light, and revise the constitution of their clubs in a spirit of wisdom and true economy. How much this revision is needed, and how little sound knowledge is current on this subject, even after the experience of a thousand years, is being evidenced almost every day.

But independent of clubs and their members, Whit Monday is a general holiday to working-men, and, arriving at a season of sunshine and gladness, is welcomed and enjoyed as only those who work can enjoy a holiday. If the museums and picture-galleries are not so crowded on this day as they were on Easter Monday, it is because there are more powerful attractions out-of-doors than there then were, and that the means of getting out into the country are more abundant and cheap. As the summer season sets in, those accommodating geniuses who on quarter day move the household furniture of so large a proportion of the Londoners, begin to prepare for moving the household too—not into new houses, but far out into fields and forests, breezy heaths and picturesque villages, just to give us at the cheapest rate a few hours' taste of a country life. Whit Monday will not have dawned an hour, before scores, nay, hundreds of their monster vans, drawn by two stout horses, and furnished with benches to accommodate forty, fifty, sixty persons—if the wee toddling children are to be counted—are rattling off with them to the blossoming chestnut groves of Bushy Park and the gardens of old Hampton Court. Ten to one but there is a fiddler or a fifer on board the van, whose doom it is to scrape or pipe the live-long day to the frolic of the little ones under the spreading trees. Then there is plenty of good fare—loaves of bread, quadrants of cheese, pots of butter, gooseberry-pies with phrenological bumps,

in family dishes, cold roast pork and halves of ham—not forgetting the pickles and the mustard. A picturesque and merry scene it is, this Whitsuntide camping in Bushy Park, and one which would have made the heart of Watteau leap for joy. The same thing on a still larger scale will be seen on the same day in Epping Forest; something like it is repeated on Hampstead Heath, Blackheath, and in Greenwich Park.

Again, at the railway stations all is bustle, hurry, and apparent confusion: the full complement of summer trains which have been running for weeks past are supplemented to-day by special holiday trains running to all returnable distances at low fares, and dragging with them third-class passengers by the thousand, whom they will have to bring back at night. On the wharves and landing-places on the banks of the Thames the crush and the crowd are equally great. The steamers lie alongside, three, four, five deep, and every other minute they are puffing and paddling off, up the river and down the river, to the strains of merry music and lusty shouts and laughter echoing from shore to shore. Into all river-side towns and villages, from Richmond, Kew, Kingston, and Twickenham in one direction, down to Erith, Gravesend, Southend, Herne Bay, and Margate in the other, the myriads of London will overflow on this universal holiday: and the salt-sea sands, the pastoral mead, the green shady lanes, the deer-dappled parks, the breezy heights of Sussex and Surrey and Kent, shall refresh and vitalise the lungs of London's work-worn multitudes, and send them back to their labours on the morrow with a new stock of oxygenised blood in their veins and new courage in their hearts. So we will hope and trust at least, and fervently wish them that enjoyment of the pure delights of nature which they seek, and that accession of knowledge which the observation of even her most familiar phenomena never fails to impart.

About the middle of June, in that week which elapses between the twelfth and twentieth of the month, we Londoners who reside in the suburbs are apt to be startled in our meditations by holiday demonstrations of a different kind to any above mentioned. You shall be sitting at your book, on a sunshiny afternoon, when suddenly a shout from a hundred or so of juvenile voices reverberates along the street, and on looking up you are greeted with the spectacle of a long train of the famous monster vans loaded to the mouth with schoolboys returning to their parents in town for the Midsummer holidays. You are amazed at their numbers as van after van rattles past, flags flying, trumpets blowing, and the dense mass of juveniles shouting frantically with their utmost power of voice and lung. In the course of a day or two you gather some idea of the immense amount of scholastic business carried on in the towns and villages within twenty miles of the metropolis—on the economical principle; and if you should come to the conclusion that the pupils of the various establishments are brought home by contract at so much per hundred by the accommodating movers of households and household furniture, it strikes us that you may not be very wide of the mark.

June the 21st is the longest day in the year, during which there is at least eighteen hours of

serviceable daylight, the sun being above the horizon sixteen hours and thirty-four minutes. The 24th of June is Midsummer day, when the quarter's rent is due. It was formerly the custom in England, on the eve of Midsummer day, to light bonfires, and spend the night in gaiety and rejoicings. This custom, which may be traced back to the Saxon epoch, is supposed to have originated in some superstitious observances connected, in Pagan times, with the apparent recession of the sun from the earth.

An interesting custom, long observed in London on Midsummer eve, was the setting of the city watch. A standing watch was appointed for the city as early as the year 1263, to protect the citizens from robbery and violence—a duty which it appears to have but imperfectly performed. In the sixteenth century the business was better ordered; and we find the mayor at that period proceeding, on Midsummer eve, in grand procession through the streets to set the city watch. An imposing procession it was—the watch consisting of nine hundred and forty men carrying fires burning in iron cressets, and large lanterns, fixed at the ends of poles. The old chroniclers report the affair as very magnificent and splendid. One of them tells us that "King Henrie the Eighth, approving this marching watch as an ancient and commendable custom of the citie, lest it should decay through neglect or covetousnesse, in the first yeere of his reigne came privately disguised in one of his guarde's coates into Cheape on Midsummer even, and seeing the same at that time performed to his content, to countenance it and make it more glorious by the presence of his person, came after on St. Peter's even (the procession being then repeated) with Queen Katherine, attended by a noble traine, riding in royal state to the King's Head in Cheape, there to behold the same; and after, anno 15 of his reigne, Christian, King of Denmark, with his queene, being then in England, was conducted through the city to the King's Head in Cheape, there to see the same."

Towards the end of June, London luxuriates in the sweet breath of summer; and as we take leave of the month the smell of the new-mown hay is borne on the cool twilight breeze into the open windows of our suburban dwellings; and we can lie down to rest with its sweet fragrance around us, and dream of the gladsome days of childhood, when we followed the steps of the mower through the red clover and golden buttercups, and joyously gathered the spoil.

#### THE CITY OF CROCODILES.

SUCH is the meaning of the term Crocodilopolis, the well-known name of a town in Egypt, where Leviathan was worshipped in ancient times. Not far from it is a place formerly called Tentysis, once filled by a busy crowd of Egyptians with long curly hair and black eyebrows, whose chariot horses had feathery plumes on their heads, and who floated their armies over the Nile on skins filled with air or on bundles of light reeds. Many crocodiles still frequent the Nile, basking in the sun on the sand-banks, or prowling by the river's side under the shade of the oozy sedge.

The traveller never meets a crocodile until he

goes as far up the stream as Minyeh, four hundred miles from the mouth of the Nile; but nobody can tell why the animals keep to this boundary. After passing Minyeh, then, in our voyage up the Nile, we were walking in the cool of one evening along the ancient river, as it wound through a beautiful palm grove, when our attention was attracted by a black thing like a sponge, which seemed to float by on the muddy stream. It stopped and quivered, and a jet of white foam gushed from its sides. We soon discovered that it was the nose of a crocodile, a hard black mass, like a lump of coal. In Job xli. 2, this question is asked, when speaking of leviathan (that is, the crocodile): "Canst thou put an hook into his nose?" and a little further on there is allusion to the spouting out of foam from the nose as the animal snorts in seeking his prey: "By his neesings a light doth shine," (ver. 18); and again: "Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron," (ver. 20).

The water of the river was so discoloured on the occasion referred to, by the melted snow from the Mountains of the Moon in Abyssinia, that the rest of the animal's body was not to be seen; but as we gazed at the strange-looking nose, two grey, sharp-set eyes appeared behind it, staring at the sun through the muddy water. "His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning," (ver. 18). As we lowered ourselves by the reeds to the water, to shoot the dreadful brute with a pistol, the reeds gave way, and our tumble into the river made the crocodile instantly sink into the depths of the stream. The waves were whitened by the swift stroke of his tail, once more reminding us of another part of the accurate description in the same chapter of Job: "He maketh the deep to boil like a pot. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary," (verses 31, 32.) We may be quite sure, that if God's Spirit directs the writing such minute accounts of his creatures on earth, and we see them to be true, the wonderful things he condescends to tell us about the glories of heaven will all be found to be equally correct.

The Egyptians call the crocodile timsah; and there is a wild lake in the desert, called Lake Timsah, where thousands of crocodiles are seen.

A little further up the river we one day saw a boy sitting by the bank and crying piteously, while his flock of goats stood still around him, with their horns showing like points against the sky on the bank overhead. He said that a crocodile, lurking by the place where his goats went to drink, had suddenly opened his fearful jaws and snapped up one of them. In a few days more, the same crocodile took another goat, and the boy ran at once to the nearest town, as he was told to do: (the name of this town is Siout, and it is reputed to be the place where our Saviour was taken by Joseph and Mary, when they fled into Egypt, by the direction of an angel, to save "the young child" from Herod's cruelty.) A crowd of men, women, and children soon turned out to attack the crocodile; but this, as we shall see, is a dangerous thing to do. "None is so fierce that dare stir him up" (ver. 10). Some of the men carried swords, spears, and clubs. So had they done in the days of Job; for we read, "The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the



CROCODILE OVER THE GATEWAY OF SIOUT.

dart, nor the habergeon" (ver. 26). The women and children brought ropes, stones, and all sorts of weapons of a lighter kind; and, when the people came near the river, they beheld the monster, one of the largest crocodiles that had been seen for many years, lying at full length on the upper bank in the sun. He seemed to be asleep, after his dinner on the goat, and part of the goat's skin still hung about his jaws, which bristled with a hundred glittering teeth. "Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about" (ver. 14). The shouting of the men awoke the sleeping leviathan; and, suddenly sweeping round, he knocked a boy into the water with his tail, while some of the men, in trying to get away, fell down the bank, between the crocodile and the Nile. "When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid" (ver. 25). The animal was not slain until four persons had been killed. Ropes were then fastened to his huge carcass, and it was drawn back triumphantly to the town. Here it was suspended, over the entrance of the principal gate, where we saw it, and made the sketch from which the accompanying wood-cut is taken.

It happened late on a moonlight evening that our boat was gliding slowly up the river with a favouring breeze; and to avoid the stream, the captain directed our course so near the bank that the end of the sail-yard often touched the shore. Suddenly we were aroused from sleep in the cabin by a loud crash, a shriek from the men, and a succession of plunges into the water. Rushing

out to see what was the matter, we found that the spar had touched a crocodile sleeping on the bank; and in trying to jump into the water, he had fallen into the boat among the sailors, who instantly leaped one after the other into the river. However, the poor crocodile seemed as anxious to part company as any of us; and after scrambling about the boat a little, and lashing the oars and cordage on all sides with his tail, he slipped over the gunwale, and dived into his deep watery bed without doing us any harm. "Wilt thou play with him as with a bird, or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?" (ver. 5.) Yes, the crocodile is a monster full of playfulness. "There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom Thou hast made to play therein" (Psalm civ. 26).

A little black bird is often found hopping about near the crocodile's nose, and it is called the "crocodile bird," as it is alleged that there is a compact between the two animals; the bird with its sharp beak picks the teeth of the monster, and he, as a reward, lets the bird have part of his food. It is probable that the bird comes near the crocodile to catch the numerous flies which buzz about the eyes and nose of every animal in Egypt; and we recollect seeing a white bird which seemed never absent from one or other of the great black buffaloes near Cairo. These animals, the bird and the buffalo, were a mutual protection, for one kept the other from insects, while the latter restrained the larger enemies from annoying his little friend, the pretty white

bird. It is a happy thing when people of different powers can thus be useful to each other, like the bird and the buffalo; but it would not do to trust a crocodile in such near approaches by any bargain or supposed arrangement with him. "Will he make a covenant with thee?" (ver. 4.)

In Isaiah xvii. 1, it is said: "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." This probably signifies Satan, symbolized as a crocodile; for by the words "dragon that is in the sea" may be meant the animal in the Nile, since the words "el bahr," "the sea," are often used to mean "the Nile" at the present day; and it was always so.

Again, by the word leviathan, in Psalm lxxiv. 13, 14, it is probable that Pharaoh is meant as the king of the country where the crocodile abounded: "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness."

The flesh of the crocodile is not unpalatable as food; but the flavour and smell are very peculiar, quite unlike anything else, and never to be mistaken when known. We once began to take the skin off a crocodile we had killed about twelve hours before, and it was very striking to observe the extraordinary closeness and strength of this outer covering. "His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered" (Job xli. 15, 16, 17). The tenacity of these scales makes it very difficult to pierce the crocodile with a knife, and javelins glance off without entering. "Darts are counted as stubble" (ver. 29); and we have repeatedly seen musket balls rebound from the back of the crocodile and fall flattened into the water, even when fired from a short distance. On such occasions, the animal seemed scarcely to feel the impact of the ball, and often turned slowly and lazily round before leaving the place. "The arrow cannot make him flee: sling stones are turned with him into stubble" (ver. 28). Behind the head, however, there is one soft part of the skin, and another behind the fore leg, where a rifle ball will penetrate. We happened to hit three crocodiles in one or other of these vulnerable points. This was considered to be unusual "luck;" for although eighty boats ascended the Nile with travellers in that year, only five crocodiles were killed altogether. Each of the successful shots was made on a Monday; and as our boat and one other were, alas! the only two which were stopped on the Sunday, according to the Lord's command, there soon sprang up a sort of superstition among the Nile boatmen, that it was because "howaja" (the gentleman) kept his holy day, the crocodiles were killed. Surely this shows how these poor untaught Mahomedans observe the conduct of professing Christians, even when they cannot understand their foreign tongue. It is very sad to think how many travellers from Christian countries leave, as it were, their religion at home, and carry to distant parts of the earth only the energy, the

money, or the luxury of Englishmen, without that knowledge of God's truth which has, more than anything else, made our country great and prosperous.

It is difficult to learn enough of the Egyptian and Syrian tongue to speak at all to the boatmen in their own language the precious truths of the gospel of Christ. Day after day one is kept in close contact with these poor ignorant men, without being able to say one sentence of what might warn, cheer, or comfort them; but this should stimulate us to greater activity amongst those we can speak to; and the benefit of Christian example need never be lessened in any country.

On Christmas day, at Cairo, we met some friends arriving in the town from a long journey, and observing to them how pleasant it was that we could spend Christmas day together, they replied with astonishment: "Christmas day! why, is *this* Christmas day? we thought Christmas was over about a week ago." They had misspent their Sundays, and had thus lost all reckoning of time.

Sometimes we endeavoured to tell the Arabs of the desert, all that could be communicated of Scripture anecdotes and truths through a dragon-man or interpreter; but we found that these "wild men," accustomed to fairy tales and endless legends, regarded the words we spoke as only a new story to be listened to along with the rest. The mission sent by the Bishop of Jerusalem to those men has been far otherwise received, and we doubt not that many of the sons of Ishmael will be among the true seed of Abraham, and be made free by the knowledge of the Saviour.

[To be continued.]

#### CANDLES.

A VERY simple matter was it in the days of our grandfathers, nay, perhaps in our own days too, if we are not quite juveniles, to make a candle. A wick of cotton dipped in a pan of melted tallow, removed, and dipped again, and the process repeated until a sufficient amount of tallow had accumulated round the wick, and there was a candle. A primitive simple candle, indeed, is one of this kind—a dip; but dip candles still hold their own in presence of all the modern mysteries of sperm and stearine. When our grandmamas wanted a candle better than a mere tallow dip, but less expensive than spermaceti or wax, they used ordinary tallow mould candles; composition candles, as they are now called, did not exist then. Few of us, I believe, know how much science is involved in the making of a composition candle.

Tallow candles have their uses, and they have also their defects. Their flame is never very brilliant, and their substance is liable to gutter; then what a plague it is to be obliged to snuff them so frequently! but tallow candles may be carried about with less damage to themselves than either candles of wax, spermaceti, stearine, or composition: this at least is an advantage. Suppose, however, tallow were a desirable thing of which to make candles universally, see what a position we should be in. Tallow, as most people know, I presume, is only a sort of hard fat which accumulates in the bodies of certain animals. However good a fat may be, considered in relation to the materials

of fuel and illumination, it must be hard—it must be *tallow*, if we are to make candles of it without the aid of chemistry; and even tallow of the best kind has great defects. Its odour is disagreeable, it is too soft, and it contains shreds of animal membrane, which makes the candle spit and throw off sparks.

If, on some very cold day, you squeeze a piece of tallow between two pieces of blotting paper, taking care you do not melt it, and, if the two pieces of paper be examined, they will be found soiled with oily matter: hence it appears that the tallow, hard though it be, really contains something which is not hard—a mere bland oil. This discovery was an important fact in the history of the candle manufacture. Follow me now to the oil cruet. The weather is still piercingly cold, and the salad oil looks different to what it did before the cold set in. Perhaps you will tell me the oil is frozen; and if you do, I do not know that one has much cause to quarrel with the expression. Experience proves, however, that cold though the day may be, the whole of any portion of salad oil never freezes, but remains fluid to the last. What is the natural inference to be deduced from this? Why, evidently, that olive oil is composed of two different fatty bodies, one capable of solidifying by cold, the other remaining fluid. In like manner, the inference is deduced that tallow is a compound of two fats, one a liquid oil, the other a fatty body, having a tendency to become solid when sufficiently cooled. This, I say, is the inference in either case—an inference proved to be correct by a celebrated French chemist, M. Chevreul, who worked at the subject of oils and fats for a period of more than twelve years.

Oils and fats are really not the simple bodies we often take them to be. As the hardest tallow contains something which is soft, and the blandest olive oil something which is hard, so, in like manner, are all fixed oils and fats made up of two or more fatty bodies. If we can remove the softest of these, and leave the hardest, we ought to be able materially to improve the manufacture of candles. This is what in reality has been done. By means of a chemical process, it is easy to extract the hard or most infusible part out of oils and fats, and turn the hard portions into candles.

Chemists are strange people. They tell us that each of the simple fatty bodies into which a compound fatty body may be separated is a salt—a compound of an acid with a base; a sweet substance called glycerine being the base, and the acid differing according to circumstances. In the case of ordinary animal tallow, the hard congealable part is a combination of stearic acid with glycerine, and the soft liquid uncongealable part a combination of oleic acid with glycerine. But to come to the point at which I am aiming: whereas formerly candlemakers were obliged to use such fats as came naturally to their hands, discarding all that might be too soft, they are now far less restricted. Since M. Chevreul, with his chemistry, has taught them to separate hard from soft fats, and to make hard fats still harder and more combustible by taking from them the incombustible portion called glycerine, the art of candle-making has become not only more refined and philosophic, but also more easy. Those vexatious long wicks,

so continually requiring snuffing, have had their *coup de grâce*. If people now submit to be troubled by them, it is their own fault, for stearine or composition candles are manufactured cheap enough to be within the reach of all. Perhaps a tallow dip may be useful now and then for carrying about; but as for tallow rushlights, I would banish them altogether in favour of Childs' Night Lights, as they are called, made of stearine, by Price's Candle Company.

The discovery of Chevreul, to which allusion has been made, may hardly suggest to the non-scientific reader a true idea of its importance. It is considered by scientific men to be one of the master discoveries of this century, however; and when I say that it has done more to give the death-blow to the African slave-trade than any one single discovery beside, perhaps, the reader may have the curiosity to demand an explanation. That explanation is simply this. The reason why native Africans are kidnapped and sold is, because of the money realized by their sale: if they would realize more money by being kept at home, depend upon it they would never find their way across the Atlantic. From the extraordinary and growing demand which is now made for oils, this is likely to become increasingly the case; for in Africa, and especially on its western coasts, there grow incalculable quantities of oil-producing trees, amongst which the oil-palm is pre-eminent.

Now palm oil is yellow and odorous, and it is not well adapted in its natural state for the manufacture of candles; but if there be any truth in the doctrines of M. Chevreul, what should prevent the chemical manufacturer from extracting from yellow and not very hard palm oil, the hard and inodorous portion of it best adapted for the manufacture of candles? Nothing prevents him; accordingly, this is now done by one of many processes, each obvious enough to the chemist, but somewhat too elaborate for description here. Though, in deference to the presumed wishes of the reader, the beautiful principles of chemistry involved in the new candle-making operation have been rather indicated than entered into, I did nevertheless venture so far on the forbidden chemical ground as to intimate that every fat is of the nature of a salt, that is to say, a compound of an acid and glycerine. Concerning this glycerine, let me now write a few words. It has become somewhat plentiful of late; it may be obtained at any druggist's shop, and almost at the shop of every oilman. It is called glycerine because of its remarkable sweetness, and is altogether a very curious substance. Firstly, it is incombustible; therefore no one will question the propriety of removing it from all fatty bodies intended for combustion, even did it not possess utilities of its own. Before the discovery of M. Chevreul, glycerine could not thus be taken out of oils and fats; hence, useful or not useful, there it must remain. The manufacturer now extracts it, and turns it to account in many ways. The physician administers it instead of cod-liver oil, which latter is very disagreeable to most palates, though glycerine is delicious. The soap maker uses it to mingle with his soap; the artist to grind his moist water colours with. It is good for chapped hands and sore lips. Meat and fruits

immersed in it remain fresh and unchanged for an indefinite time. The photographer uses it, and many other classes of people, I have no doubt, whom I cannot just now remember.

Though palm oil may be considered the grand staple of stearine or composition candles, it is by no means the only one. Cocoa nut oil is also used extensively, and indeed the beauty of the discovery made by M. Chevreul is its applicability to all fatty bodies. There are some curious points yet to be adverted to in connection with stearine or composition candles. It was in the year 1847, if I mistake not, that Englishmen were all on the *qui vive* about poisoned candles. The fact was this. So thoroughly effectual was the treatment devised by M. Chevreul for separating the hard matter of fats and oils, that it threatened to be almost too hard: it crystallized around the wicks, and fell off in flakes. It would have been provoking indeed had the new candles been worthless in consequence of their exceeding excellence; but, at any rate, they must not be allowed to crystallize; that would never do.

Next in the order of discovery, the fact was made out that a certain proportion of wax melted with the stearine prevented crystallization. Ay, but wax is dear. Well, terrible to relate, the fact was also discovered that a certain portion of white arsenic melted with the stearine also prevented crystallization. The application of this arsenical discovery had fortunately but a short existence. Arsenic is never so dangerous as when absorbed through the lungs, and had arsenical candles maintained their sway, there is no foreseeing the amount of terrible consequences. They soon went out of vogue, conquered by another discovery most provokingly simple. Inasmuch as crystals can only form whilst particles are free to move in all directions, some person bethought himself of the expedient of pouring the stearine into the candle moulds, not at the point of highest fusion as hitherto, but after it had become somewhat pasty by cooling. This simple expedient was tried with complete success, and it is now always adopted.

The discovery of Chevreul being properly applied to a fatty body, no matter how coloured it may be, is competent to give an absolutely white result. Nevertheless, the fact will perhaps have been remarked, that the best English stearine candles will have a shade of yellow. Oh, prejudice! to what absurdities dost thou bring us! Wax candles are yellow or straw-coloured; *they* cannot be made white; but sperm candles, which are white, occupy a lower rank than those of wax. Well, forsooth, in order that stearine candles may not be mistaken for sperm candles, and may wear the aspect of wax ones, they must needs be tinged (to their own detriment be it known) with gamboge. Apropos of wax candles, I may now state that they are neither made by dipping nor by moulding, but by dipping combined with rolling, the latter operation being performed on a slab of marble.

Some years ago there was considerable talk about candles manufactured, or, rather, to be manufactured, out of peat bog. There was no doubt as to the fact. I have not only seen such candles, but I have burned them, and excellent candles they are. They are composed of a che-

mical principle termed paraffine, which can be got out of peat bog, but all attempts to get it economically have failed.

There is one subject which the discovery of M. Chevreul suggests, so pregnant with future consequences, so expressive of the goodness of the Almighty in permitting a discovery to be made just when mankind wants it; that I cannot forbear touching upon it. Very little of the tallow of which candles, before Chevreul's discovery, had been made, was the produce of highly cultivated lands. We sent to the steppes of Russia for it, over which countless millions of horned cattle run wild; we sent also to South America and to Australia. So large an exuberance of animal life as the tallow merchant requires cannot be found in any land where population is thick, and ground is inclosed and cultivated. Except, then, we are prepared to admit that the present condition of the surface of the earth is permanent; that Russian steppes, and Australian grass lands, and the prairies and pampas of the New World, will never bend under the fuller dominion of man, and become inclosed, each bearing an appropriate crop; except we assume this, I say, man's necessities for grease will be developed in precise ratio to the difficulty of obtaining it. This is no mere groundless speculation. Not only, in the matter of soap and candles, were we crying out for grease, grease, of an exclusive kind, just as the discovery of M. Chevreul dawned; but our steam-engines, our locomotives, and all the myriads of steam-moved combinations were thirsting for oil (liquid grease) so strongly, that lubricating matters of animal origin would not have been adequately forthcoming. Machinery is no less exclusive than are candles in the matter of grease. The former cannot have it too thin, while the latter cannot have it too thick; so the discovery of M. Chevreul suits them both.

#### AN ADVENTURE IN ARRAN.

It was early on a lovely autumnal morning, in the year 18—, that Ronald M'B—, a small sheep-farmer in the northern district of the island of Arran, in the Western Highlands, left his home, attended by two faithful collie dogs, for the purpose of gathering some sheep, which were pasturing on a secluded hill, at the distance of several miles from the farmstead. Though early in the fall, there was just sufficient sharpness in the atmosphere—the result of the slight frost of the previous evening—to render the exercise of walking pleasant and exhilarating. Ronald felt and appreciated the influence of the time and scene; for he was a man of much more than the average intelligence of his class, and a devout admirer of nature, with which, in many a solitary vigil, he often held communion on the lonely hill-side, in the romantic glen, or by the desolate mountain tarn, surrounded on all sides by the dreary, monotonous dun hue of the moorland waste.

On the present occasion, the scene was eminently calculated to arouse his sympathies with the beauty and grandeur of external nature. His road lay towards the western side of the hill; and, as he turned a shoulder of the hill which he had been for some time climbing, he came full in

view of the sound of Kilbrannan, which separates Arran from Argyleshire, heaving and glittering in the rays of the morning sun like an expanse of molten silver. To the south-west he could distinguish the Mull of Cantire, blue and indistinct through the haze; while, still further to the south, the Craig of Ailsie reared its huge form amidst the waters, with its rounded shoulders and precipitous sides admirably adapted to withstand the utmost fury of the billows of the Atlantic. Sailing craft of all sizes spread their canvas to woo the gentle morning air, though, seen from Ronald's elevated point of view, they seemed like mere dots on the burnished surface, while here and there in the distance a long pennon of black smoke gave token that omnipresent steam had there its representatives, giving an additional aspect of liveliness and animation to the scene. In his immediate neighbourhood, the prospect was one of wild and sterile grandeur. On either hand hills rose into the air, clothed, about two-thirds of their height, with a short, rich, velvety grass, producing unequalled sheep pasture—the remaining third being composed of lofty, jagged peaks of granite, emerging from their verdant covering, and frowning defiance and destruction to all beneath them. Nor did the threat seem altogether a vain one; for all down their sides, and along the glen through which Ronald now took his way, huge masses lay singly imbedded in the soil or heaped together, as at different periods they had fallen from the exposed summits.

"Where twined the path, in shadow hid,  
Round many a rocky pyramid,  
Shooting abruptly from the dell  
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;  
Round many an insulated mass,  
The native bulwarks of the pass,  
Their rocky summits, split and rent,  
Formed turret, dome, or battlement."

As he stepped sturdily on to his destination, he absolutely revelled in the cheering sights and sounds around him. With delight he sniffed up the fresh morning air, inhaling health with every inspiration, and feeling his chest expand and his spirits rise at every step of his progress. Overhead he heard the wild cry of the lapwing in its wheeling flight; and ever and anon he was startled by the sudden whirr of the black cock, as he sprang from his heathery covert, and with rushing wings disappeared over the shoulder of the neighbouring hill. While in the full enjoyment of this state of pleasurable and healthy excitement, he observed that one of his collies had started a very large rabbit, and, the other dog joining in the chase, it seemed to Ronald (who could not help feeling a little interested in the result) that they must soon run it down, particularly as they had headed it down hill, where the long hinder legs of the rabbit told decidedly against it. They gained upon it every moment, and at last seemed just about to seize their prey, when it suddenly slipped beneath one of the huge masses of granite we have before described as lying thickly scattered on the hill side, and disappeared from view. Ronald felt more disappointed than he cared to confess even to himself; for, in the first place, he had become considerably excited during the short chase; and, in the second, he

had made up his mind that a savoury addition to his morrow's dinner should have been supplied by the rabbit which had just so vexatiously vanished.

Going up to the rock, he found it to consist of an immense mass of granite, seemingly some tons in weight, and apparently resting on several smaller fragments of the same formation. Convinced that the rabbit lay concealed between some of these fragments, and that he might yet recover it, he stretched himself, face downwards on the ground, close to the foot of the rock, and, thrusting in his arm beneath it as far as he could reach, proceeded to rummage for the object of his search. While so engaged, what was his horror and amazement to feel the huge rock suddenly slip down several inches, and, with irresistible and remorseless pressure, fix his arm, just above the elbow, between its own base and one of the underlying fragments? The enormous mass had been so nicely poised, that the smallest disturbance was sufficient to destroy its equilibrium—a circumstance, as is well known to geologists, of not infrequent occurrence—and hence the frightful result. Ronald's first instinctive impulse was to endeavour to withdraw his arm—for the pressure, though severe, was not sufficient to crush the limb; but a moment's consideration convinced him of the utter hopelessness of the attempt—he was as immovably fixed as if he had formed a portion of the rock itself.

And now how bitter were his reflections, how dreadful the revulsion from his previous state of cheerful buoyancy! The contrast was too cruel, and, manly as he was in character, the big tears rolled from his eyes as he thought of the terrible doom which might be in store for him. And, in truth, his situation was sufficiently awful to justify the most desponding presages as to his fate. He was at a distance of several miles from the nearest habitation, and the spot was so lonely and sequestered, that he might die of starvation ere any chance wayfarer was likely to take that direction, and so discover his position. His mind filled and confused by these fearful anticipations, he found himself unable to collect his faculties sufficiently to reflect with calmness on the misfortune which had befallen him, and to estimate the prospects of relief which a cool review of the circumstances might have suggested. The prolonged pressure on his arm, too, was becoming more and more intolerable; and, as time passed on, the pain, combined with the continued want of sustenance, gradually told upon his system, and he sunk into a species of stupor or syncope, which happily relieved him for a space from his state of suffering. How long he remained in this condition he could only guess by the position of the sun, which, when he recovered his consciousness, gave indication that several hours had elapsed.

As he looked around him with a vague hope of deserving some means which might lead to his release, nothing met his eye save the desolate granite-dotted heath, of which he was the solitary occupant, and the expanse of sky, now becoming overcast with heavy lowering clouds, portending a mountain storm. Indeed, occasional large drops of rain already began to fall, and the wind swept in fitful gusts along the course of the ravine. The only exception to the utter loneliness of the pro-

spect, consisted in the presence of some marsh-loving bitterns and curlews, whose heavy flapping flight, and wild "eerie" cries, rather added to than relieved the dreary aspect of the whole scene, and, combined with the threatened inclemency of the weather, increased the depression and misery of the unfortunate prisoner. But it was no time to indulge in unavailing regrets or impotent despair. He resolved at least to make an effort towards his release. The first thought that flashed across his mind was to amputate his arm with his clasp-knife. Finding himself foiled, however, in his endeavour to reach the pocket in which it was deposited, reflection came to his aid, and convinced him that even should he succeed in severing the limb, he must inevitably sink by exhaustion from loss of blood before he could hope to reach a place where assistance might be procured. Dismissing this idea from his mind, therefore, he bethought him of his faithful collies as the only feasible means of effecting his deliverance. These poor animals had manifested the utmost distress and solicitude when they perceived their master's misfortune. They ran whining and sniffing round the rock as if seeking for some means of relieving him, returning every now and then to fawn upon him and lick his face, in token of their affection and sympathy. Calling them to him now, he endeavoured to make them comprehend that he wished them to set off for home, hoping that their arrival there would serve as a means of alarming his family as to the cause of his continued absence. For a long time his efforts were unsuccessful. Their very affection for him proved the greatest obstacle in his endeavours to render their services effectual. Though when scolded away they retreated for a short distance, they returned time after time, crouching fawningly at his side, as if humbly deprecating his displeasure. Almost despairing, at length it occurred to him that his youngest boy was the constant playmate, and consequently special favourite, of the eldest collie, Laddie, which had been reared on the farm from a puppy. Addressing him, therefore, in shepherd phrase, he exclaimed : "Hie away wide, good Laddie, hie away wide, seek Allister, good dog, seek Allister ;" and his heart throbbed with renewed hope when he saw the sagacious animal's eye light up with a look of pleased intelligence, and at the same moment, pricking up his ears, with a joyful bark and a bound he set off at the top of his speed. Left thus alone, Ronald hopefully reflected that "man's extremity is God's opportunity."

Arrived at the farm-stead, honest Laddie found his master's small household busily engaged conveying home and stacking the last portion of the season's peats—the Highlander's staple fuel—which, having been cast about the month of June, are allowed to dry and harden on the surface of the peat-moss until a later period of the year brings sufficient leisure to have them carted home and secured in stacks for winter's use. The sagacious collie soon found out his young master, busied like the rest ; and having paid his respects in his own way by leaping up on him, and licking his face and hands, began to conduct himself in so singular a manner as at once to attract the attention of all. Running a short distance along

the road which led to the hills, he looked back anxiously at the young lad and gave a piteous whine ; and seeing that he was not followed, repeated the manoeuvre again and again, till at length, coupling his strange behaviour with the fact of his presence without his master, a suspicion began to be aroused that some accident had befallen the latter—an idea which was confirmed by the vehement symptoms of joy the dog displayed when Allister offered to follow him. Convinced that something was wrong, and fearing they knew not what, the members of the family sent in all haste for a number of their nearest neighbours, and after a hurried consultation, having provided themselves with ropes and other implements which might be useful in any species of accident, and a few simple restoratives, set out on the route which Ronald had followed in the morning, to the manifest delight of the faithful Laddie. That sagacious quadruped immediately constituted himself leader, and trotted sedately in the van, turning every now and then with the greatest gravity to see that his followers were keeping proper rank and order in their line of march.

My story is nearly told. In due time they arrived at the spot where the poor prisoner, much exhausted, still lay in wearisome inaction in his strange durance. Amidst many expressions of surprise at the singularity of the accident, and commiseration of his sufferings, the party proceeded with the utmost caution to effect his release ; an achievement which they found much more difficult than they had anticipated, owing to the ponderous size of the rock, and the dread of inflicting further injury upon their unfortunate friend. At length, however, chiefly by attending to his own directions, this object was happily accomplished, and, placing the patient upon a litter, he was carefully conveyed home and put to bed, where he lay many days under medical attendance, before he was sufficiently recovered to resume the active duties of life.

#### NOTES ON RAILWAYS;

BY AN OLD RAILWAY TRAVELLER.

TRAVELLING lately on a railway in a midland county, we met as companions in the carriage a sexagenarian Scotch gentleman and a young student of Cambridge.

"How slowly we get on," said the latter ; "our speed is not twenty miles an hour."

"Tis certainly slow," replied the other ; "but if, like me, you could recollect the old coach-road travelling, you would not complain. I can now leave Edinburgh at ten o'clock in the morning, and be in London with comfort before that hour the same night ; whereas, when I first made the journey, I started in the mail-coach (then indisputably the quickest conveyance) at four o'clock on a Monday afternoon, and reached the *Belle Sauvage*, in Ludgate Hill, at three o'clock on the Thursday morning—cold, rattled, jaded, and nearly three nights out of bed."

This was certainly a good ground for not grumbling at twenty miles an hour, and merits the con-

sideration of those who do so; yet the student's complaint was a just one, for the gradients were not high, and the rate was considerably under the average. Railway management has not been brought to perfection, and we are no apologists for its faults; but it is often blamed very unreasonably. Many of our readers must have met with a person of the following type. He has an air of business importance, and affects to be deep in railway knowledge generally, but especially so of the line on which you are travelling, his remarks on which are most depreciatory. It is, he says, ill made and worse regulated; it is characterized by slow motion, high charges, and uncivil servants. It has, it seems, been carried quite in a wrong way, for had it gone not by A., but by B., the expense would have been less, the direction better, and he would have had no waiting at C till he got a train for D. This, he adds, is all owing to the directors, who, he hints, are combined with those of some other line to defraud the public. It is, in short, a bad concern, very different from the F. line, of which a friend of his is director, and the management of which is admirable. If there are women or children in the carriage, he kindly adds that he is glad he has not to pass the bridge at E., as they have, for it is decidedly dangerous.

To many, the exaggeration and absurdity of all this, and the self-conceit which dictates it, will be very apparent; but the confident tone in which such remarks are propounded misleads the inexperienced, for whose benefit we offer a few observations.

Generally speaking, there can, in the formation and direction of lines, be no interest to subserve save that of the public; and when one hears it said that another line would have been preferable, it should occur to the listener that no person is entitled to say so who is unacquainted with the difficulties which had to be encountered. Yet, in nine cases out of ten, the objector knows nothing of these obstacles, in the construction of the existing one, such as the requisite engineering, the parties to be dealt with, the value of the land, and the properties to be purchased; and it should be considered how unlikely it is that the existing line was taken till the best advice had been got, and due attention given to the arguments on both sides. We lately heard a stranger to the district in which we were travelling point out—what, to be sure, was undeniable—that we were taking a circuit, which to him seemed unnecessary; but he was ignorant that the divergence of half a mile accommodated at their own doors the inhabitants of a large village, who would otherwise have been much more than that distance from any station, while the time lost was trifling.

Railways must be made to suit towns, not towns to suit railways. Were it supposable that this mode of transit had been discovered before towns existed, lines would of course have been put on the nicest levels, and, in relation to these lines, villages, towns, and manufactoryes, would have been planted; but London, Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow, were large and populous long before railways were dreamt of. Unless, therefore, in constructing the latter so as to suit the former, grounds had been levelled, rocks bored, and hills tunnelled, the lines would often have been so long

and circuitous that it would have been better to have stuck to the old roads and old coaches.

People grumble loudly about high railway charges, and complain of trains not running at convenient hours. When the public, however, are accommodated so much better than of yore, how unjust is it to refuse the proprietors a reasonable remuneration. No doubt, when railway traffic has superseded that on an old road, advantage has sometimes been taken of the public in the shape of high fares and otherwise; but such abuses are soon put down, either by the formation of a competing line, where that is practicable, by the fear of coaches being resumed on the common road, or by the denunciations of the public press. As to the other complaint, when any place comes to be connected by railways with various others, the arrival and departure of trains cannot possibly be so arranged as to suit at all times the convenience of every town, much less of every traveller. Take the station at York, into which lines run from every point. The train from London might be easily accommodated for passengers to Newcastle, had these two places alone to be thought of; but Mr. Jones is going from Harrogate to Scarborough, Mr. Tomkins from Leeds to meet Mr. Tonkins at Barnard Castle, and Mr. Wiggins has pressing business at Manchester with Mr. Figgins. It would puzzle a conjuror to please not only all these, but several hundreds more, going and coming to and from twenty different places.

How much, by the way, the comforts of railway travelling might be improved by passengers attending more to their own duties. And, first, as to luggage. It is well if you can do with as little as will go under the seat of the carriage; but it not, see it properly labelled, leave it with the officials, and trouble yourself no more about it till you reach your destination. People who have taken their seats preparatory to the starting of a train, often get fidgety about their luggage, and, at the risk of being left behind, run out to see if it has been put in the van, where, though it is safely housed, it is not always easy to get their eye on it, and thus they cause themselves needless uneasiness. Not one in a hundred of railway travellers finds any difficulty from loss of luggage, and when he does so, it is very often his own fault.

Always endeavour to have change in silver, ready to pay for your ticket. It is provoking to see your predecessor at the pay-place, whose fare is to cost him a trifle, ask perhaps eighteen shillings in change of a sovereign from the clerk, while your seat is to cost you fully eighteen shillings, and you have it in silver ready in your hand. Inattention to this simple matter encroaches on the time of the officials, and retards the train.

Have your ticket ready to show when it is asked for. We do not insist that you should, as some gentlemen obligingly do, stick it in the front of your hat; but you may always have it readily accessible. One may sometimes see a lady search first her purse, and then her pocket, out of which, after some minutes' groping, she pulls the ticket from amidst a chaos of keys, cards, thimbles, and sweetmeats, little thinking that the railway servant has still a long range of carriages to visit, and of the detention of which she is thus the cause.

If you are not going to the extreme terminus, be very observant of the station at which you are to stop. You will find it marked by a signboard, to which you had much better trust than to the announcement by the man who calls its name. This matter, we think, might be better regulated in railway management; for these proclaiming porters are commonly natives of the district, and their provincial accent, or a clipping habit of pronunciation, makes them frequently unintelligible to strangers.

Be sure, when you leave at an intermediate station, to look after your luggage before the train moves on again. When, however, on arriving at the extreme terminus, you wish to get your luggage, place yourself, on leaving the carriage, near to the luggage-van; but do not, from anxiety, press on the men who are engaged in removing its contents to the platform. Be patient, and you will soon secure your property.

Never quit the train till it has stopped, and do not get alarmed when the whistle is sounded, or the motion becomes slower. Do not then dread any impending accident; for the precaution which is frightening you is the guarantee of your safety. If you cannot banish such fears, do not travel on railways; for your tremor is not without danger to others. We once witnessed an accident, by which two persons got broken limbs, caused solely by the silly fear of a lady. She was in a train which was on the eve of starting, and which was filled with passengers, when, seeing another coming, she absurdly exclaimed that it would run into them. A general panic followed, persons leaped from the carriages in all directions, and many were bruised and hurt, besides two whose limbs were fractured.

Trust to the information of the officials. By disregarding it, a friend of ours was lately subjected to a proper penalty. On the stopping of his train the passengers were civilly told by a porter that in half an hour it would move again from a place which he pointed out on the opposite side of the station. Excepting our friend, all the passengers left the train, had an opportunity of getting refreshments, and found it when and where they were told it would be. In his anxiety not to lose his place, however, our over-cautious friend kept in the carriage, where he was locked in, and shunted backwards and forwards about ten times, it being necessary to shift the train so often to make room for others. He had then to proceed fifty miles farther, unrefreshed and hungry.

May we in conclusion suggest, how much the pleasure of travelling would be enhanced were there less reserve between strangers whom chance has placed in the same carriage? In France, each man generally addresses his opposite unknown neighbour with affability; but in Britain a censorable *mauvaise honte* keeps many from being the first to break silence. In his entertaining book, "Stokers and Pokers," Sir Francis Head, speaking of the murder at Slough in 1845, by Tawell, says: "A few months afterwards we happened to be travelling by rail from Paddington to Slough, in a carriage filled with people, all strangers to one another. Like English travellers, they were all mute. For nearly fifteen miles no one had uttered a single word, until a short-

bodied, short-necked, short-nosed, exceedingly respectable looking man in the corner, fixing his eyes on the apparently fleeting posts and rails of the electric telegraph, significantly nodded to us as he muttered aloud, 'Them's the cords that hung John Tawell.'" We can tolerate, however, what may be called an involuntary silence, but have no patience with the surly character who encloses himself on his seat, eyeing his fellow-passengers with an inquisitive scowl, and discouraging any attempt made at rational talking. Some of our readers may remember the anecdote of the good-natured Frenchman, who, being anxious to engage in conversation a dour old gentleman, who was his fellow-traveller in a coach, addressed him thus: "Sare, I hope you are well;" but receiving no reply, repeated the question more emphatically, "Sare, I hope you are *ver* well;" to which the old ascetic sulkily rejoined: "I was very well, sir, when we came away; I am very well now; and when I get ill, I'll let you know."

#### HOW TO GROW OLD GRACEFULLY.

Who grows old gracefully? Who can display a charm through the dim and sunken eye, the faded cheek, the thin grey hair, the shrinking, weakening frame, on which time strikes the hour more punctually than a minister bell?

Not the worldly-hearted, who grudge each year that cuts off a portion for enjoyment, and shortens the lease of life; who walk in thoughtlessness among seen things, and regard not things unseen and eternal. Not the covetous, whose satisfied to-morrow never arrives, and who have always something more to gain ere the account may close. Not the fashionable beauty, who trembles at decay, and blames the bad taste of modern styles that hint at unbecoming changes. Not the student, who has always schemes of discovery and attainments in view, for which even patriarchal age were insufficient. On these old age sits awkwardly, as if it were a burden suddenly alighted on their shoulders from some unknown region whether they had been accidentally betrayed. No, it is in nothing earthly to patent an invention that can remedy the trace of time, or supply a substitute for joys "that perish with the using."

But it is the high privilege of Christianity to proclaim the heavenly recipe whereby the hoary head may become a crown of glory, and to point to "the path of the just," which is as "the shining light, that shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day;" wherein old age glides serenely to the gates of "the celestial city," and "to live is Christ," while "to die is gain."

If temperance, industry, benevolence, benefit the health, and reap a present reward, how much more the tranquillising influence of peace with God, holding the passions in subjection, regulating the mental powers, and spreading the charm of contentment over the placid face, and the smile of love around the lip where "the law of kindness" dwells! Here is no melancholy caricature of life, aping what is gone, for the merry sport of more youthful folly; but here is the grace that dignifies what is, and commands the respect even of those who know not whence it springs.

The same God who watered the seed ere the blade had sprung to light, and whose care has cherished it to maturity, still gazes with infinite complacency on the shock of corn fully ripe; and while he permits it to linger on the stem, it is only that more witnesses of its goodness may gather round, ere he reaps it in triumph for the garner of heaven.

He whose life has been an epistle of Christ, and whose ever-presiding motive has been the glory of God, and he alone, grows old gracefully, and hails time as a friend, who just touches only to remind him that "the night is far spent" and "the day is at hand."—"The Object of Life," published by the Religious Tract Society.

## Varieties.

**PROLIFIC EGYPTIAN WHEAT.**—At one of the last meetings of the Académie des Sciences, at Paris, M. Guérin Meneville produced a number of wheat-haulms of more than seven feet in height, each of them bearing several splendid ears. This fine species of wheat derives its origin from five grains that were found in an Egyptian tomb, and thus had for thousands of years been preserved from all external influence. Sown out in 1849, they grew up luxuriantly, and yielded a twelve-hundred-fold produce, in consequence of which, M. Drouillard made various comparative experiments in Southern and Central France, as well as in Brittany. In 1850, these experiments were made on a large scale, and assumed a more important character. Since then they have been regularly continued, and the results have been officially confirmed. One half of a field was sown with the Egyptian, the other half with our common wheat; the former gave sixty-fold, the second a fifteen-fold produce, while commonly a seven or eight fold produce is considered a fair one. Sown out by single grains, the Egyptian wheat yielded a five-hundred and fifty-six fold harvest. The experiments are now made in always increasing extension, and not less than 1000 kilogrammes of "mummy wheat" have been sown this year in the arrondissement of Marlaix. These remarkable facts, we should say, may furnish matter of speculation to the natural philosopher.

**DISCOVERY OF A FOSSIL SEAL.**—Very recently, the workmen at the Cupar Muir clay-pits laid bare the skeleton of an animal which has since been determined by Mr. Page to be that of a seal, and which must have been imbedded there when the Howe of Fife was an estuary, and the sea stood 120 or 150 feet above its present level. The locality in which these interesting remains were found is about eight miles inland, and upwards of 100 feet above the present high-water level. Geologically speaking, the clays and gravels of Stratheden are on the same horizon as the clays and gravels of Strathmore, Carse of Gowrie, Strathearn, the Classes of Stirling and Falkirk, and the upper silt of the Clyde, and have been variously set down as "drift," "diluvial," "Upper Pleistocene," and "turbary." Mr. Page is now decided as to their Upper Pleistocene age, which places them immediately above the true boulder-clay, and beneath all the lacustrine and estuary silts which have taken place during the human epoch. According to this doctrine, this solitary seal is a pre-Adamite of our northern waters, and is further invested with interest as being the only fossil specimen of the seal family which has yet been discovered; at least Professor Owen, in his "British Fossil Mammalia," makes no mention of any of the Phocidae having been found either in the Upper Secondary or in the Tertiary formations. The specimen now found is a young animal, apparently the *Phoca vitulina* (or very nearly allied species) about three feet in length, and in a wonderful state of preservation—almost every bone being fit for the artificator, with the exception of the upper portion of the skull, which had been accidentally struck by the spades of the workmen.

**PIONEERS OF RELIGION AND LITERATURE.**—Were the Church compared to an army, I should say that the other clergymen present belonged to the artillery, and good service are they doing in their permanent positions at the batteries and in the trenches, against our common foes, Ignorance and Sin. I happened to be draughted in the Light Brigade, whose service was upon the outskirts of the camp. In a ministry, the twelfth year of which completed itself yesterday, it has fallen to my lot to travel over 200,000 miles in the performance of clerical duties. Our training, as itinerant ministers, began in the saddle, and, in lieu of holsters, we carried saddle-bags crammed with books for study and for sale; for our church economy held it a duty of the minister to circulate good books, as well as to preach the Word. Let me change the figure. Although we were graduates of Brush College and the Swamp University, we were always the friends of a wholesome literature. Picture, then, a young itinerant, clad in blue jeans or copperas homespun; his nether extremities adorned with leggings; his head surmounted with a straw hat in summer, a skin cap in winter; dismounting from

the finest horse in the settlement, at the door of a log cabin, which may serve as a school-house or a squatter's home, carefully adjusting on his arm the well-worn leather bookcase. See him as he enters the house of one room, where is assembled the little congregation of half-a-dozen or a dozen hearers—backwoods farmers and hunters, bringing with them their wives and little ones, their horns and rifles. The religious service is gone through regularly as in a cathedral. At its close, our young friend opens the capacious pockets of his saddle-bags, displaying on the split bottom chair which has served him as a pulpit, his little stock of books, to the eager gaze of the foresters.—"The Rifle, Axe, and Saddle Bag," by W. H. Milburn, the American Blind Preacher.

**THE RUINS OF THE TOWER OF BABEL.**—The "Journal de Constantinople" publishes a letter relative to archaeological discoveries made in Western Asia by M. Place, French consul at Mosul. The passages which refer to the ruins of the Tower of Babel are interesting. These ruins are still most imposing, and can be discovered at a distance of twenty leagues. Six of the eight stories of the tower have crumbled away. Its base forms a square of 194 metres. The bricks of which it is formed are of the purest clay, and almost white. Before being baked, they were covered with inscriptions, written in a clear and regular hand. Some persons in modern days have inquired where all the bitumen came from which was employed in the construction of the tower, as recorded in the 11th chapter of Genesis. It happens that a stream of bitumen still exists in the neighbourhood of the tower, and flows in such abundance as at times to form a *bond-fide* river. The inhabitants then set fire to it, and calmly wait until the flames die away from want of fuel. Several interesting photographic views have been taken by M. Place of the ruins, as well as of various parts of Nineveh. Amongst these ruins he discovered a quantity of small jewels, engraved stones, and a profusion of coins. Some of the engraved stones are remarkable; one is of a cylindrical shape, and pierced in the direction of its axis, in order to be suspended round the neck, if necessary. On this piece of transparent quartz, the sculptor has engraved a figure with fine curling hair, dressed in a long narrow tunic, bordered with fringe. It is upright, and extends one hand towards an altar. Amongst other discoveries are inscriptions on bands of gold, silver, and copper, and a species of unknown substance similar to ivory.

**A CUNNING CAT.**—One day the cook in a monastery, when he laid the dinner, found one brother's portion of meat missing. He supposed that he had miscalculated, made good the deficiency, and thought of it no more till the next day, when he had again too little at dinner-time by one monk's commons. He suspected knavery, and resolved to watch for the thief. On the third day he was quite sure that he had his meat cut into the right number of portions, and was about to dish up, when he was called off by a ring at the outer gate. When he came back there was again a monk's allowance gone. Next day he again paid special heed to his calculations, and, when he was on the point of dishing up, again there was a ring at the gate to draw him from the kitchen. He went no further than the outside of the kitchen door, when he saw that the cat jumped in at the window, and was out again in an instant with a piece of meat. Another day's watching showed that it was the cat also who, by leaping up at it, set the bell ringing with her paws, and thus having, as she supposed, pulled the cook out of the kitchen, made the coast clear for her own piratical proceedings. The monks then settled it in conclave that the cat should be left thus to earn for the remainder of her days double rations, while they spread abroad the story of her cunning. So they obtained many visitors, who paid money for good places from which to see the little comedy, and they grew the richer for the thief they had among them.

**SALAD** was a rare treat in England in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII. Queen Catherine, when she wished for one, had to send to Holland or Flanders for it.